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Fifth Part. Pottery. General observations, products, price and manufacture of the pots. Decoration. Manufacture of blast pipes.

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Crafts in our sense are nonexistent among the Pangwe. All the manual skills are only practiced on the side and are strictly secondary to the economic activities of agriculture, catching fish, and trapping. The very simple skills are familiar to and practiced by everyone. Beyond that, specialization begins, and among the Pangwe it is developed to the utmost. Indeed, this specialization goes so far that, for example, not even the carrying straps for children -- which only consist of two leather strips sewn together -- can be made by all household heads; furthermore, a person who manufactures eating spoons cannot make any other wood product, not even a stirring spoon. A stool maker knows only how to make stools, a crossbow carver can only make crossbows, one who makes men's carrying baskets (ebā'de) can only make men's carrying baskets. Since in one village there are often no more than one or two people who know a craft, the inhabitants of the village have to purchase the objects not manufactured by these craftsmen from all corners of the compass. It may happen that they have to go some distance or even make a journey to obtain a stool, a crossbow, or the like /205/

1. Bark work.

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Tree bark is used in many ways in the Pangwe household, either in raw form or made into cloth.

(a) Raw bark.

It is used for the following purposes.

1. To cover the house wall and as a door (1).

1. For house construction use is made of the bark of about 15 trees whose scientific names, insofar as I could

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Fig. 159. Manufacture of Bark Cloth by Beating the Bast Layer of a Ficus Trunk, Uelleburg, Spanish Guinea.

287 done along the entire length from left to right, and the beater
314 must not be turned (that is, the direction of the grooves) Figure
159. Then the material is folded, beaten on the opposite side,
folded once more and tapped, and finally, folded diagonally,
it is worked in the same manner. Through this treatment, the
piece has been made about twice as long, while in breadth it
has remained unchanged. At this point it is unfolded, drawn
through water a few times, and then pressed out. /209/ Mate-
rials prepared from the varieties Ficus bubu, andum, and undum
need not be washed.

The individual pieces of material manufactured in the manner described are narrow. Hence, several of them must be sewn together along their long edges if one wants to make a loincloth, for instance. For men this requires six pieces; for boys four.

2. Fiber work.

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● 463 With few exceptions, fiber work is one of the occupations carried out by men. Indeed, it is one of their most frequent and

462 favorite activities. This explains their skill in sewing, patching,
463 and so forth, which the European discovers to his joy in his Black
servants.

(a) Thread and sewing.

283 The simplest material for fiber work is thread (klēs IV, ndē's,
284 IV) from the climbing Aracea Rhctophyllum mirabile N.E. Brown
(klēs IV, ndē's IV). The threads are obtained by cutting off the
aerial roots and drawing out the fiber bundles which are extremely
durable and frequently quite long. /Fig. 160 appears here in the
original text. / They are used for sewing, for children's fishing
rods (ngā'k), and, secondarily, as binding material for combs made
of strips of raffia leafstalks and neck bands made of bands of rattan
palm (or Marantacea strips).



Fig. 160. Bobbin with String.

The raw leaf fibers of the pineapple are also used to sew pieces
of bark cloth together, etc.

(b) Ropes and knotting.

283 Plant fibers are used more frequently in the form of strings
(Fig. 160) than as thread. Just like the shoemaker's thread in
Europe, the strings are twisted together by rolling them with the
flat of the hand on the upper thigh. The plants used for this pur-
pose are pineapple, plantain, raffia, Gaertnera, and Triumphetta.

From the pineapple, the fiber bundles of the leaves are used;
its strings are quite durable -- but not in water, and therefore fish-
ing lines cannot be made from them -- and fairly fine, so they
are especially suitable as strings for beads. A charming effect is
created by the shoulder bags tied with them (mō'k I), into which are
put all kinds of little personal belongings, medicines, and so forth.
These bags are taken along on journeys, chiefly by men.

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Fig. 172. Stages in Making a Stool.

322 The explanation lies in a kind of principle of reciprocity, a principle clearly stated in the educational precepts to be discussed in a later section /Ed., Vol II/, that is, the seller counts upon the fact that later he will need his client who is in turn a specialist in the manufacture of some kind of article (basketwork plates, for instance), and he then expects to be treated in the same lenient manner. As a result of the excessive division of labor, everyone is dependent upon everyone else, and this dependence keeps the prices down. Wherever this dependence is absent, the prices go up. Europeans, for instance, with whom such a silent agreement does not exist, pay considerably more, ten or twenty times more, and at the same time they have to put up with inferior work as well.

322 Moreover, the sale of objects manufactured for household use is not regarded as an enterprise for profit. When I asked a stool maker whom I befriended what his business brought in, he first

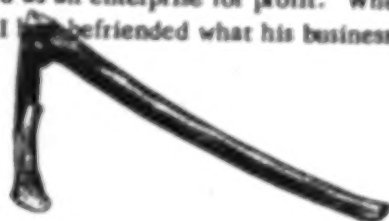


Fig. 173. Adz.

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403 The role of the towns in the external trade of the region is evident, but their role in regional economy is no less essential. In fact, formerly the population had hardly any specialization, because of limited needs: each group was self-sufficient. No division of labor was prescribed aside from the allotment of tasks to men and women. Only smiths possessed a special technique which allowed them to ply a trade. Yet they were not a caste; a smith could ally himself by marriage with any family whatsoever, and a farmer's son might become a smith.

326 Everyone could extract iron ore, but only a skilled man who had acquired knowledge and magical power could work metal. Professional differentiation is /sic/ obviously still rudimentary. Perhaps it corresponds to a mediocre technological level: the stock of tools is limited—a stone used as an anvil, an iron bar as a hammer, and a bellows as a forge. The smith does not seem to have been the mysterious and awesome figure found in other societies. At most we may believe that there were sexual prohibitions connected with certain phases of his work, which allows us to assume a magical or religious aspect (1).

1. Miss /Mary/ Kingsley, Travels in West Africa, London, 1897; we should note however "an important pottery art, ironwork that deserves particular mention owing to its excellence, a technique for treating latex, an art of plaiting clothes" (in Balandier, "Village fang /Fang Village/, " Études centrafricaines, 1951).

403 The small number of objects in use did not require a real division of labor. A piece of grooved ivory was used for beating bark to soften it for the making of clothes. This technique has evidently disappeared. There /were/ a few potteries; the wooden bowls are now replaced by imported ware. One still fairly often finds calling drums, wooden ladles or spoons carved by artisans, and mortars. Spearheads are currently sold in the markets. Crossbows are less and less used, and hunters make their own nets.

Needs which are now more varied have given rise to /36/ many professional specializations. A few are represented in rural districts,

463 but most of the artisans live in towns; there it is that they learned their trades, more easily find materials and tools, there also they believe the multitude will enable them to collect a large number of orders.

Certain crafts are long established, such as tailoring, masonry, and carpentry. But while Pahouin are numerous in the woodworking and building trades, as tailors they frequently have to compete with immigrants. New professions arise, often controlled by foreigners also—photographers, mattress makers, and mechanics. This brief list of the most widespread trades allows one to infer the rise in the standard of living: doors and windows, tables, chairs, wardrobes, beds, mattresses are now in quite general use.

369 166 The towns plan an essential role and are completely integrated into the country, since it is there that the rural people go to have the things made which they need. The mixed character of town populations is astonishing. Immigrants from all regions of the Cameroons or French Equatorial Africa give them a cosmopolitan character, while the bush has not sustained such a complex intermixture.

Nevertheless, we must not exaggerate the antithesis between country people and townsfolk: many countrymen have resided a few years in town and have kept up connections there. Migration away from centers was quite active thirty years ago, and certain Pahouin tribes were largely represented in the timber industry. There has been just as decided a movement toward the towns: "The development of cacao plantations along the Woleu-N'Tem by changing the living conditions of the villagers certainly seems to have been the principal cause of the halt in emigration in 1930." This remark by Sautter about the Fang is also true of the Boulou and—to a lesser degree, perhaps—of the Béti and assimilated tribes more closely pressed together in their habitat.

463 162 Béti, Boulou, or Fang form a petty bourgeoisie rather than a proletariat without resources. The following figures show the relatively small proportion of unskilled laborers (1):

1. M. Soret, Démographie et problèmes urbains en A. E. F. /Demography and Urban Problems in French Equatorial Africa/, I. F. A. N. /Institut Français d'Afrique Noire/, 1954.

Occupational Distribution of Pahouin Emigrants in Douala

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	Laborers	Artisans	Intellectual Occupations	Traders and Licensed Dealers
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Beti	37	55	1.9	6
Borloulou		60	40	

A study of Dolisie, Baronga, and Poto-Poto makes it possible to establish similar facts for occupations (2). /39/

2. According to J. Guilbot, Petite étude sur la main-d'oeuvre à Douala /A Brief Study of Manpower at Douala/, I. F. A. N. /Institut Français d'Afrique Noire/, the Cameroons, 1947.

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871 The proportion among them of persons who have education is about 40 percent and, what is even more important, that of the well-educated is relatively high.

Poto-Poto: Cultural Level of "Coastal Forest Dwellers"

Illiterates	Educated	Holders of the C.E.P.*	Holders of the "Brevet"
610	390	111	56

/*Certificat d'études primaires, certificate of primary education./

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16b After spending some time in town, some emigrants return to their native villages, thus diminishing the separation between the two places. The bush folk, in turn, often come to the urban centers (1) and in

1. A set of figures gives the exact number of these trips: in 480 budgets relative to a total of 2,000 persons, 1,116 trips were listed (J. Binet, op. cit., p. 112).

369 such a case we gather that each principal town of a subdivision is a
 166 genuine center of attraction. Although new these towns are not artificial. There is another piece of evidence for this, the social-occupational distribution of the urban population is almost constant from one town to another, a proof that it corresponds to needs that are also constant.

463 Out of 100 inhabitants one generally finds: laborers 16.5, em-
 162 ployees 12, traders 8.3, chauffeurs 6.9 (and "motor boys" 4.3), public service employees 6.7, domestic servants 5.8, carpenters 4.9, masons 4, farmers 3.5, tailors 3.2, mechanics 2.9, photographers 0.8, herders 0.5, catechists 0.1, without occupation 9, etc.

This in general outline is the present-day distribution. Let it simply be kept in mind that, with the diffusion of a new culture, the whole society becomes modified. The techniques and tools in use have been increased and diversified at the same time as social conditions.

Chapter 5

Social Organization

1. Forms of Settlement, Habitat

621 The basic social group is the patriarchal family (nda bot = lit.,
 614 house of the people), to which corresponds the hamlet or elementary village, the jal (Boulou, pl. mal; Fang, Ewôndo, dzai), generally called by the name of the patriarch (ésa = father; ndôl = eldest, senior), but sometimes, when isolated, carrying a special toponym (éyôl = proper name, designation; a person's name is rather jôé; Fang, édzôé). These mal are usually arranged into multifamily, sometimes multi-clan, villages, minlam (sing. nlam), the latter term designating both the group of dwellings and the soil appertaining to them. The nlam always has a place name of its own, which may refer to its geographical situation: nkôlayôp = on the hill; to a topographical or botanical peculiarity: ako'abete = dressed stone, ajap = the name of a tree, ma'an = crossroads; or to an incident connected with the founding: ébolewo'o (Ebolowa) = decayed chimpanzee, because the village was

177 ascending relative. These /factors/ explain the success and persis-
 621 tence of parallel judicial processes, which are illegal from the point
 of view of European law, although sometimes tolerated by the ad-
 ministration.

d. Delinquency

674 If the older people are to be believed, delinquency offenses used
 to be rare: secret societies with their ordeals and swift punishments
 prevented delicts by the fear they inspired. At present the jail books
 and the judicial statistics make it possible to gauge the dimensions of
 the phenomenon, but there is no proof that all delinquents are prose-
 cuted. Some affairs never reach the ears of the law: for instance,
 fathers of families often deplore the immorality of their sons or their
 wives, whom they accuse of stealing from them, but since no com-
 plaint is lodged, these facts are not recorded.

It is usual in Africa to complain of the rise in juvenile delinquency.
 The figures at my disposal do show an increase:

	18 yrs.	18 - 20 yrs.	20 - 25 yrs.	25 - 30 yrs.	30 - 35 yrs.	Over 35 yrs.	Total
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
1936	3	3.5	19	32	18	25	100
1946	-	10	21	35	15	14	100
1956	7	7.2	25	22	15	24	100

/73/ But this increase is not as great as might have been feared.
 A study of the statistics allows another conclusion: delinquency is
 369 an urban phenomenon. In fact, only people following city occupations
 are found in the jails. In a region of primarily agricultural activity,
 a relatively low number of rural delinquents is remarkable. Admit-
 tedly we must recognize that in towns law enforcement is easier, also
 that the more Westernized townsmen do not hesitate so much to make
 use of the courts. Nevertheless, the differences between the delin-
 quency rates of different occupations deserve to be pointed out, al-
 though the figures below are, of course, only approximate. They
 674 463 were obtained by a study of the census returns for three towns in the
 southern Cameroons and by a comparison of the jail books for the
 same localities.

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	Office-holders	Trade Employees	Traders	Butchers	Tailors	Carpenters	Masons	Chauffeurs	Mechanics	Motor Boys	Domestic	Laborers	Chiefs	Planters
Percent of Delinquents	4.8	15	7.5	4	8	5	3	13	10	23	8.3	8	10.8	0.8

Employees in trade, chauffeurs, and apprentice chauffeurs are the social groups with the lowest standard of behavior. The nature of the delicts makes it possible to be precise: in the Beti country of the Cameroons, moral delicts /delit de mœurs/(desertion of the conjugal domicile) make up 47 percent of the cases; theft and swindling, 26 percent; intentional assault and battery come far behind with 16 percent.

These figures enable us to measure the decline of the present-day family. (J. B.)

e. Land Tenure

423 According to early documents land regulations formerly were very simple. There appears to have been no rights over land: "Land belongs to whoever takes it; it has no value. It is not sold, not given, as a guarantee for debt, does not enter into inheritance." There is absent not only the notion of private ownership of land but also that of collective ownership: "There is never any conflict between villages over ownership of land;... We often see an outside village insert itself between two groups of dwellings belonging to the selfsame Boulou village." (1) In Fang country in Gabon the situation was

1. Report to the League of Nations, 1922.

similar: "In the Woleu-N'Tem region, tradition is unaware of the idea of ownership even by a village." (2)

Distribution According to Matrimonial Status

	Municipal Councilors	Sample of the Total Population of the Boulou and Beti Area (1)
	Percent	Percent
Polygamous	43	23
Monogamous	43	63
Unmarried	3	14

1. A random sample taken for the study of family budgets, 1954, op. cit.

That councilors are often polygamous is to be explained in terms of their relatively advanced age and their wealth.

As elderly possessors of wealth and polygamous, do the elected men embody all the traditional ways in contrast to a progressive younger generation? An examination of occupations, of educational level, and of religion reveals that the actual situation is more complex.

Distribution by Occupation

	Municipal Councilors	Adult Male Population of the Nyong and Sanaga Region (2)
	Percent	Percent
Chiefs	30	1.8
Planters	30	85
Office-holders	14	0.5
Trade employees	3	1
Traders	10	7
Craftsmen	5	?
Catechists, mission monitors	2	2.3

2. According to the annual administrative report; approximations are involved, Yaoundé-Ville being excluded.

623 If we set up an index of electoral power based on the percentage
 463 in councils and the percentage in the total population, we come to
 871 the conclusion that office-holders are very much on top (70). Chiefs
 come next (17), then trade employees (3), and traders (1.4). Dis-
 tribution in terms of educational level confirms the influence of
 educated people /intellectuels/ that could be guessed at from the
 occupational table. /134/

Distribution by Educational Level

	Municipal Councilors	Adult Male Popu- lation of Nyong and Sanaga Region
	Percent	Percent
Illiterate	10	75
Literate in local language	9	?
Literate in French	60	17
Holders of the C. E. P. *	10	8 (1)
Holders of higher diplomas	2.4	0.3
Worthless figures **	8	--

1. The regional statistics give "primary completed," not "C. E. P. "; the nuance may mean a great deal. A survey of the urban population of Ebolowa gives a lower rate: 6.4 percent of certificate-holders.

* Certificat d'études primaires, certificate of primary education. /

** Ambiguous: Fiches inutilisables may refer to the quality of the statistics or to the use of meaningless initials after an individual's name. -Tr. /

The tremendous influence of holders of higher diplomas is obvious, so that uneducated people are almost eliminated, although they are still numerous.

Thus this new élite crystallizing out of the municipal elections appears to be made up of men who are both traditionalist and modern.